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CITSEE WORKING PAPER SERIES



# **Citizenship in Media Discourse in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, and Serbia**

**Davor Marko**

**Working Paper 2012/25**



European Research Council



University of Edinburgh, School of Law  
The Europeanisation of Citizenship in the Successor States of the Former Yugoslavia  
(CITSEE)

**Citizenship in Media Discourse in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro,  
and Serbia**

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## **Citizenship in Media Discourse in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, and Serbia**

Davor Marko<sup>1</sup>

### **Abstract**

The aim of this paper is to systematize existing research on media reporting related to various aspects of citizenship, and to contribute with a primary analysis of media content, in order to define how the leading print media in four states (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, and Serbia) reported on these issues. After establishing the profile of each state, this paper provides a profile of the analysed media, followed by a short summary of how these media reported on selected citizenship-related issues and topics. The main trends in media reporting were analysed within an interdisciplinary theoretical framework that includes the selected approaches / theories in media and communication studies, but also the studies on citizenship. The main assumption is that the mass media in the states under scrutiny, while reporting on citizenship-related issues, have mostly legitimized governments in determining their citizenship policies. Only in Montenegro and, to some extent, in Croatia, when it comes to external voting, have oppositional media outlets continuously criticized the “official” citizenship policies, while in other states the leading media discourses lack a polemical and critical stance towards citizenship-related issues.

### **Keywords:**

media, political clientelism, citizenship, nationalism

## **1. Introduction**

There is no in depth research on how the media cover issues related to citizenship in the states that belonged to the former Yugoslavia. First, citizenship is too broad and complex a topic to attract the continuous and comprehensive attention of media analysts. On the other hand, the topic itself had not been sufficiently explored before a series of studies prepared by the CITSEE project. What could be found were analyses on how the media in specific states reported on specific topics (minority rights, cultural values, ethnic preferences, ideologies, etc.).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> For example, this is how the Slovenian media reported on the “erased” (<http://www.mirovni-institut.si/izbrisi/brazgotine-izbrisa-prispevek-h-kriticnemu-razumevanju-izbrisa-iz-registra-stalnega-prebivalstva/>). For studies on how the media treats minorities and their rights, these topics have been investigated by: Mediaplan Institute (<http://www.mediaplan.ba/docs/KomparativnaAnaliza2005-2007.pdf>) and Mediacyber and Analitika from Sarajevo (<http://www.analitika.ba/en/publications/margins-minorities-and-media-see/>); Novi Sad School of Journalism from Serbia (<http://www.novinarska-skola.org.rs/NNS3/index.html>); Faculty of Political Science from Zagreb and STINA Agency from Split, Croatia (<http://www.stina.hr/>);

The aims of this research paper are therefore multiple. First, it attempts to systematize existing research on media reporting related to various aspects of citizenship. Second, this paper will provide a primary analysis of media content, in order to define how the leading print media in four states (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, and Serbia) reported on these issues. Third, the main trends in media reporting will be analysed within an interdisciplinary theoretical framework that includes the selected approaches / theories in media and communication studies, but also from studies on citizenship.

“Citizenship regime” is here understood to mean “the concept which encompasses a range of different legal statuses viewed in their wider political context, which is central to the exercise of civil rights, political membership and full socio-economic membership in a particular territory”.<sup>3</sup> Three groups of possible topics for research may be derived from this definition. The first refers to more general topics related to citizenship as a concept and to the corpus of rights, taking into account the circumstances under which the initial determination of citizenship took place and the role of ethnic engineering in the inclusion/exclusion of certain categories of people. The second group contains topics that are common for two, three or four states such as dual citizenship policies, the status of those in diaspora, the status of *de jure* and *de facto* stateless individuals (such was the case with refugees in Serbia and Kosovo Albanians), and the integration of the Roma. The third group consists of topics that are state specific such as the “citizenship-by-investment” in Montenegro, and the Finci Sejdić case in BiH.

The media landscapes of the former Yugoslav republics belong to the “Mediterranean or polarized pluralist model”, defined by Hallin and Mancini. This model is characterized by low newspaper circulation, an elite-oriented press, external pluralism<sup>4</sup> and a high degree of political parallelism, commentary-oriented journalism, and weak professionalism. In this sense, political parallelism refers to media content, organizational links between the media and political parties, the partisanship of media audiences and the tendency of media personnel to be active in politics.<sup>5</sup>

In relation to the state, the media has diverse roles: (a) as a tool that legitimizes, and as such reflects, official state politics, (b) as an agent that criticizes the official politics of a regime, and (c) as a public space in which to debate different visions of citizenship and political community. My assumption is that the media mostly played an important role as a tool to legitimize governments (and their citizenship policies) during the 1990s. But not all influential media were under the control of political regimes; some acted as an opposing force. During the 1990s

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([http://www.mim.org.mk/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=itemlist&layout=category&task=category&id=2&Itemid=61&lang=en](http://www.mim.org.mk/index.php?option=com_k2&view=itemlist&layout=category&task=category&id=2&Itemid=61&lang=en)).

<sup>3</sup> Shaw & Štikš, 2010: 5.

<sup>4</sup> External pluralism means that media as institutions, not their contents, are plural and in specific contexts severely divided.

<sup>5</sup> Hallin, and Mancini, 2004: 26-29, 67.

oppositional media offered a place for alternative voices and perspectives mainly by criticizing their respective regimes, though less so in terms of real analysis of the problems related to citizenship status. On the other hand, the so-called waves of "democratic changes" and liberalization that took place at the beginning of the 2000s brought some essential changes to the work of the media. While the newly established regimes in Serbia and Croatia did lose control over the media compared to their predecessors, new forms of control emerged. Privatization and commercialization shifted the media away from direct political control; instead there was indirect political control through various interest groups with ties to politicians. This trend of external pluralism (meaning the media as institutions became more plural) brings about the polarization of media markets and competitive ways of reporting.

This analysis will be framed within the scope of the agenda-setting theory,<sup>6</sup> which claims that the media have a large influence on audiences in terms of which stories they consider worthy, how prominently they publish certain stories and issues, and how much coverage they receive.<sup>7</sup> There are four interrelated components of the agenda-setting theory: the media agenda (reflecting media content), the public agenda (issues discussed with the wider public), the policy agenda (issues debated in the "political arena", parliament, pre-election campaigns, etc.) and the corporate agenda. The media are able to transform policy into news and thus present it as something worthy of public interest. Mass communication scholars pay more attention to how the media and public agendas might influence policy maker's agendas. Although the major tenets of agenda setting theory have maintained their importance with the changes brought by new media, some modifications of the theory have occurred. These changes relate individuals' agendas to their group affiliation. Accordingly, groups and communities represent a "collected agenda of issues" and "one joins a group by adopting an agenda", while groups are defined as "collections of people based on some shared values, attitudes, or opinions" that individuals join.<sup>8</sup> The active role of the media in creating and imposing daily agendas and promoting certain worldviews and policies in regard to citizenship will be the focus of this analysis.

I focus on the media agenda by analysing the contents of leading media related to citizenship in four selected states. I will compare it to official policy agendas in order to detect and explain coincidences and differences between these two agendas (media and political). Therefore, I will take into account the political (ideological, ethnic, national, etc.) affiliation of the media in order to illustrate the

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<sup>6</sup> The agenda-setting theory was introduced in 1972 by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in their ground-breaking study of the role of the media in the 1968 US presidential campaign.

<sup>7</sup> As McCombs states, "Through their day-by-day selection and display of the news, editors and news directors focus our attention and influence our perceptions of what are the most important issues of the day. This ability to influence the salience of topics on the public agenda has come to be called the agenda setting role of the news media", McCombs, 2004: 1.

<sup>8</sup> Ragas, Roberts, 2009: 45–64.

way in which citizenship-related issues are reported. I will consider the following variables are:

- a) Contextualization – What is the general role and position, consequently the influence of selected media in the specific national / regional context?
- b) The position of media – How do (certain) media report on citizenship related issues? Do these media, due to an exclusive political or ideological affiliation, follow the official political agenda of a government or political party? How do the so-called oppositional media react while reporting on controversial issues? Do they take more of a professional or independent attitude, or do they just mirror the oppositional standpoints and are therefore used as a tool for political propaganda?
- c) Trends, and main characteristics of reporting on certain issues, will also be taken into account.

This research will be conceptualized as a compilation of case studies with comparative elements, where I look for similarities and differences in media reporting on citizenship. This will not be an exhaustive study, but rather a study that deals with a selected sample of printed media sources. The approach will be of a qualitative nature rather than quantitative, due to time and resource limitations. Therefore, this is mostly a descriptive work serving as a first step towards better understanding of the role of the media in shaping and influencing citizenship regimes. Samples will consist of materials from the print media (from 19 daily publications and 7 published weekly<sup>9</sup>) of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro before and after their separation in 2006, where spoken and written language(s) have more similarities than differences. Another reason is the fact that certain citizenship-related issues overlap (e.g. dual citizenship, minority issues) and are interrelated amongst these states.

This paper focuses on the period from 1991 to 2012. While the 1990s were the period when the media were often used in order to spread propaganda, negative portrayals of those perceived as “others”, and were misused by nationalist elites to forge new, often exclusive policies of citizenship, the 2000s brought significant changes that influenced the internal dynamics of citizenship policies. Similarly, the mass media as gone through essential changes: the privatization of national and local media, the emergence of new media outlets emerged and the saturation of media

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<sup>9</sup> For Croatia the sample consists of *Jutarnji list*, *Večernji list*, *Vjesnik* (dailies), and *Feral Tribune* (weekly); for BiH – *Dnevni avaz*, *Nezavisne novine*, *Glas Srpske*, *Dnevni list*, *Oslobođenje* (dailies), and *Slobodna Bosna*, *Novi reporter*, *Dani* (weeklies); for Montenegro – *DAN*, *Pobjeda*, *Vijesti* (dailies), and *Monitor* (weekly); and for Serbia – *Politika*, *Večernje novosti*, *Glas javnosti*, *Danas*, *Dnevnik*, *Blic*, *Kurir*, *Pravda* (dailies) and *Vreme*, *NIN* (weeklies).



markets. During this period, Montenegro declared its independence in 2006, followed by Kosovo in 2008.<sup>10</sup>

## 2. Bosnia and Herzegovina: exclusive and competing media Discourses on the issue of belonging

Compared to the other three states, the media landscape of BiH is the most complex. Divisions along many lines (mainly ethnic but also political) are important for understanding its media. The media market of BiH is oversaturated: for less than four million inhabitants there are nine dailies, four news magazines, six news agencies, and six professional associations of journalists.<sup>11</sup> Its Public Broadcasting Service has a complex structure that follows the structure of the state of BiH and its entity divisions.<sup>12</sup>

Researches on the media in BiH<sup>13</sup> indicate that editorial policies mostly match the interests of separate ethno-political groups or parties. This is the case with the pro-Bosniak *Dnevni Avaz* based in Sarajevo and the most influential media outlets from the Republika Srpska that are under the control of the regime of this entity's current president, Milorad Dodik, and his party *Alliance of Independent Social Democrats* (SNSD). In this entity, a single party controls the media by distinguishing them as either "eligible" or "enemy" media.<sup>14</sup> In addition, *Dnevni List* and *Večernji List*, based in Mostar, promote the interests of Croats in BiH. For a long time the Banja Luka-based daily *Nezavisne Novine* played an important role as the leading oppositional outlet in the RS, but today it is also close to Dodik. The oldest daily, *Oslobođenje*, used to be close to the Social-democratic party (SDP). In its editorial policy it generally insists on the need for empowerment of state level institutions in BiH at the expense of entity level institutions.

Based on their attitudes towards the state of BiH and the common values shared by its constituent groups and citizens, the media in BiH can be divided into three groups. The first group insists on intercultural exchange with strong criticism of the current authorities. It includes the magazine *Slobodna Bosna* (a role it took over from the magazine *Dani* after the elections in 2010) which offers a vision of a secular BiH, respecting its differences and diversities. The daily *Oslobođenje* could also be

<sup>10</sup> Neither Kosovo-based media, nor other media in the Albanian language, are part of this analysis.

<sup>11</sup> This data is available on the web page of the Press Council of BiH, <http://www.vzs.ba>.

<sup>12</sup> This system has a complex structure which follows territorial and ethnic divisions in BiH. It is made up of three broadcasters – an umbrella service (BHRT) and two entity services – Radio-Television of the Federation of BiH and Radio-Television of Republika Srpska. Faced with numerous financial and staffing problems and frequent indirect political pressure on editorial policy, the umbrella state television is trying to maintain its proclaimed primary goal – professional, timely, and balanced reporting on issues of public interest for all citizens. Source: Marko, in Udovičić, 2007: 47 – 48.

<sup>13</sup> Tajić, 2007; Udovičić, R., 2010.

<sup>14</sup> This was confirmed in the statement of SNSD spokesperson Rajko Vasić, who refused to speak to any media outlet from Sarajevo because the Federation of BiH is "another world" for him. He also added that some media from Banja Luka such as Alternativna televizija, BN TV and daily newspapers like *Euroblic* are not welcome at their press conferences either.

classified as belonging to this group (it used to be close to the SDP in BiH, but nowadays is closer to the conservative Party of Democratic Action or SDA). BHTV also belongs to this group.

The second group is characterised by what I call *realpolitik*, and includes Federation TV, *Dnevni avaz* from Sarajevo, *Dnevni list* and *Večernji list BH* from Mostar, and *Nezavisne Novine* from Banja Luka. These media do not neglect the fact that BiH is an independent state, but offer politically affiliated opinions fostering a vision of the state of BiH from different ethnic, political, cultural or religious angles. *Dnevni Avaz* strongly promotes the idea of a common BiH state, with a particular emphasis on Bosniak issues and a vision close to that of the head of the Islamic Community of BiH, Reis-ul-ulema Mustafa Cerić. Changing stances in the editorial policies of *Dnevni avaz* (that have corresponded with the political deals of its owner, Fahrudin Radončić) make it almost impossible to detect a constant and stable way of reporting. In this category is also *Večernji list BiH*, a pro-Croat daily connected with its sister newspaper in Croatia, which does not oppose the existence of BiH, but strongly emphasizes what the paper considers to be the unfair position of the Croat people.

The third group comprises media located in RS and Banja Luka – RTRS, the daily *Glas Srpske* and the magazine *Novi Reporter*, as well as TV BN from Bijeljina, report sympathetically on the RS and Serbia, with a very negative stance toward the “rest of BiH”. For example, comparing the cases of Kosovo and RS, the current vice-president of this entity in BiH, Emil Vlajki (self-declared as a Croat), wrote an article in *Novi reporter* in favour of Republika Srpska’s right to independence on citizenship grounds. Along with other reasons, he wrote that “Albanians from Kosovo had the status of national minority”, while “Serbs are constitutive in BiH”,<sup>15</sup> and, according to article 6 of the Constitution of Republika Srpska, “Citizens of Republika Srpska have citizenship of this entity”. He also refers to Article 7 of the Constitution of BiH, which states, “There shall be citizenship of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to be regulated by the Parliamentary Assembly, and citizenship of each Entity”.<sup>16</sup> This comment illustrates the editorial policy of *Novi reporter* that considers the RS as being a state on its own that has a right to declare independence.<sup>17</sup>

These positions are reflected in their positions on the following citizenship-related issues which exemplify the treatment of citizenship in the BiH media: dual citizenship and discussion on Article 17 of the Law on Citizenship, revision of the naturalization process of granting citizenship to certain categories of people (former soldiers, for example), the Finčić case, and the way that how leading print media in BiH cover citizenship-related issues of the national minorities.

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<sup>15</sup> Vlajki, E, “Yankee go home”, *Novi reporter*, 16 February, 2008: 11.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

## 2.1. Dual citizenship: the case of Article 17

The most controversial issue in the media linked with citizenship relates to Article 17 of the Law on Citizenship in BiH. This Article provides that “citizens who have not renounced citizenship of other states with which BiH has not signed dual citizenship agreements, will lose citizenship of Bosnia and Herzegovina by January 1, 2013”.<sup>18</sup> According to this Article, citizens of BiH living abroad may only hold the citizenship of another state if it has a bilateral agreement with BiH.

The Ministry of Civil Affairs has tried to find a solution through agreements on dual citizenship with those states in which a large number of Bosnian citizens live. But the politically motivated decision of the former Bosniak member of the Presidency of BiH, Haris Silajdžić, to veto a decision to sign bilateral agreements with Croatia in 2008 and Montenegro in 2009 provoked many reactions, yet was supported for instance, by *Dnevni Avaz*. His argument was that victims of war and refugees (mostly of Bosniak origin) had also fled to the US, New Zealand and Canada, none of which had signed bilateral agreements of the kind that Bosnian citizens needed to keep both citizenships.<sup>19</sup> The most radical critics came from the Croat media, since Bosnian Croats who also possess Croatian citizenship could lose their Bosnian citizenship if no agreement on dual citizenship is signed with Croatia. Journalists of the daily *Večernji list* reported that Bosniak politicians, while negotiating peace in Dayton, advocated this solution due to the prediction that “the majority of BH citizens of Serbian and Croatian origin will take up Serbian or Croatian citizenship, respectively, while many Bosniaks living in exile or as refugees will come back to BiH”.<sup>20</sup> *Večernji list* saw the changing course in Bosniak politics, represented by Bakir Izetbegović (Silajdžić’s successor), as an opportunity to resolve the problem.<sup>21</sup> Through the lenses of ethno-politically affiliated journalism, these two examples indicate the manner of reporting of the leading pro-Croatian daily in BiH when it comes to the status of Croats in this state. While Silajdžić has been portrayed negatively for blocking negotiations with Croatia in regard to dual citizenship, his successor Izetbegović has been portrayed as a moderate willing to take into account the status of the Croat people in BiH as well.

The future of Article 17 is still uncertain, since in June 2012 the representatives of political parties from RS in the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH refused to accept the decision of the Constitutional Court of BiH to eliminate this article. While some media from Sarajevo warned that this obstruction would affect the citizenship status of half a million Bosnians and Herzegovinians<sup>22</sup>, the media from RS ignored this fact, mainly because it will not affect the official policy of the RS politicians towards

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<sup>18</sup> Zakon o državljanstvu BiH, Službeni glasnik BiH, br.4/97,13/97,41/02,6/03,14/03.

<sup>19</sup> Hadžović, E. “Bosnians face being deprived of citizenship”, *Balkan Insight*, 13 April 2011, available online: <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/bosnians-abroad-may-remain-without-citizenships>.

<sup>20</sup> “Nakon 2013. Hrvati iz BiH moraju birati RH ili bh. državljanstvo”, *Večernji list*, 24 August, 2010.

<sup>21</sup> “Bakir Izetbegović rješava problem dvojnog državljanstva i Hrvatima”, *Večernji list*, 25 September 2011.

<sup>22</sup> „Pola miliona građana gubi dokumente BiH”, *Oslobođenje*, 6 June 2012: 9.

citizenship and, additionally, since this case was highly instrumentalised and misused by the Bosniak politicians (primarily Silajdžić) this has not been considered an important issue for Serb politicians.

## 2.2. *Revision of naturalization of foreign citizens*

In 2006 the State Commission for the Revision of Decisions in Relation to the Naturalization of Foreign Citizens was formed, and the results of its first report provoked much debate.<sup>23</sup> As the weekly *Slobodna Bosna* reported, from 1992 to 2006 around 15,000 citizenships were issued to various categories of people, out of which 1,500 were not of Yugoslav origin. Many of these decisions (for example, 38 out of 50 in the first wave of naturalization) were not legally based. For these cases, the Commission considered the option of revoking citizenship. As a journalist of this weekly predicted, the most controversial issue has been those who were naturalized due to the fact that they took part in the war—either as members (formal or informal) of the Army of BiH (former *Mujahedeens*), or the Army of Republika Srpska (of Greek, Russian, or Ukrainian origin).<sup>24</sup> *Slobodna Bosna* had reported on the issue earlier, outlining the kind of discrimination faced by those of Bosnian origin who were not granted citizenship of BiH or who had to pass much more complex and rigorous procedures.<sup>25</sup>

The sensationalistic coverage of *Nezavisne* of the terms of the (legal) procedures under which citizenship was granted is epitomised by its headline: “16,000 citizenships DISPUTABLE”. The article was based on an interview with the Commission's president Vjekoslav Vuković who didn't explicitly mention that these citizenships were “disputable”, but said that documentation is incomplete, as is the process of revision that has been undertaken before the Commission was formed.<sup>26</sup> On the other hand, *Glas Srpske*, openly stated its position: “Illegal naturalization will be finally prosecuted by legal authorities”, where the word “finally” indicates that this daily reported in a continuous and coherent manner against naturalization, and against the specific group of naturalized citizens of Islamic origin. It is indicative of this media outlet that it reported in a very selective manner. While mentioning illegally naturalized citizens, they only mentioned those of Islamic origin, and not those of Ukrainian, Greek and Russian descent, as well as Serbs from Croatia who fought on the side of the Army of RS and were granted citizenship as well.<sup>27</sup>

*Oslobođenje* reported on the process of de-naturalization in a more balanced manner. As this media outlet reported at the beginning of 2007, as a result of the process of revision, BiH citizenship has been taken away from 367 individuals. The

<sup>23</sup> See for detailed analysis the Sarajlić's CITSEE working paper, Sarajlić, 2010/06: 21-23.

<sup>24</sup> „Od 1992 do 2006 dato je 15.000 Bh. državljanstava“, *Slobodna Bosna*, 25 May 2006: 46-47.

<sup>25</sup> „Sirijci, Egipćani, Alžirci lakše su dobijali državljanstvo od BiH od Bosanaca“, *Slobodna Bosna*, 8 January 2004: 30-32.

<sup>26</sup> “Sporno 16.000 državljanstava“, *Nezavisne novine*, 4 November 2011: 3.

<sup>27</sup> “Nezakonita naturalizacija konačno na tapetu pravosuđa“, *Glas Srpske*, 2 February 2008; „Tužilaštvo BiH istražuje nezakonitu naturalizaciju“, *Glas Srpske*, 6 February 2008.

majority are from Turkey (72), 31 are of Egyptian origin, then there are 27 Tunisians, 23 Sudanese, 21 Syrians, 20 Russians, 14 Jordanians, 11 Ukrainians and 10 people from Iraq and Saudi Arabia.<sup>28</sup>

### 2.3. *The Sejdić-Finci case*

*Sejdić and Finci v. BiH*<sup>29</sup> is a case in which the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights found a violation of Article 1 of Protocol No. 12 (general ban on discrimination) in 2009. The applicants, Dervo Sejdić, of Roma ethnic origin, and Jakob Finci, of Jewish ethnic origin, both citizens of BiH, complained that despite possessing experience comparable to that of the highest elected officials, they were prevented by the Constitution of BiH<sup>30</sup> and corresponding provisions of the Election Act of 2001 from being candidates for the Presidency and the House of Peoples of the Parliamentary Assembly solely on the grounds of their ethnic origins.<sup>31</sup> The court considered that the applicants could claim to be victims of alleged discrimination since both, in order to be eligible to stand for election, had to declare their affiliation with one of the “constituent peoples”.<sup>32</sup> Also, apart from ethnic minorities, Serbs from the Federation and Bosniaks and Croats from Republika Srpska cannot run for the state presidency, which is also a discriminatory practice. This Court’s decision obliges the authorities in BiH to adjust the constitutional and legislative provisions in order to prevent further discrimination. In spite of the fact that the Parliamentary Commission, tasked with amending the constitution to meet the court’s ruling, was formed in September 2011, by the second-half of 2012 its members failed to reach an agreement on ways of implementing the 2009 ruling by the European Court of Human Rights. The magazines *Dani* and *Slobodna Bosna*, and the daily *Oslobođenje* (through commentary) were the main vehicles for public debate, giving voice to various parties and experts directly or indirectly involved in the case.

Almost all of the mainstream media reported on the work of the Commission on a regular basis, with no values or attitudes expressed, and usually presented the views of local officials and some EU and Council of Europe officials on the problem.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> “Borcima za BiH oduzimaju se sva prava”, *Oslobođenje*, 12 December 2003: 7; “Revizija državljanstava”, *Oslobođenje*, 20 May 2006: 3; „Nezakonitosti zaštićene pečatom državne tajne“, *Oslobođenje*, 22 March 2007: 5; „Maktouf i Karaj ostali bez bh. državljanstva“, *Oslobođenje*, 7 March 2008: 4.

<sup>29</sup> For detailed analysis on the case, see working papers on [www.citsee.eu](http://www.citsee.eu).

<sup>30</sup> The Bosnian Constitution, in its Preamble, makes a distinction between two categories of citizens: the “constituent peoples” (Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs) and “others” (Jews, Roma and other national minorities together with those who do not declare affiliation with any ethnic group). The House of Peoples of the Parliamentary Assembly (the second chamber) and the Presidency are composed only of persons belonging to the three constituent peoples.

<sup>31</sup> They relied on Articles 3 (prohibition of inhuman and degrading treatment), 13 (right to an effective remedy) and 14 (prohibition of discrimination) of the European Convention on Human Rights; Article 3 of Protocol No. 1 (right to free elections) and Article 1 of Protocol No. 12 (general prohibition of discrimination) to the Convention.

<sup>32</sup> Available on the web page of the Council of Europe, [http://www.coe.org.rs/eng/news\\_sr\\_eng/?conid=1545](http://www.coe.org.rs/eng/news_sr_eng/?conid=1545).

<sup>33</sup> „Izbacuju nas iz Vijeća Europe“, 27 February 2011., *Dnevni list*: 6; „Vijeće ministara BiH započelo pripreme za provedbu presude Evropskog suda za ljudska prava, te usvajanje zakona o državnoj pomoći, 21 July 2011., *Slobodna Bosna*: 41 – 42; „Sejdić – Finci opet na početku“, 9. septembar 2011., *Oslobođenje*: 3.

Most media outlets (with the exception of certain media in the RS) have showed a positive orientation towards finding a solution and mostly criticized the commission for its inertia and inefficiency. But only a few, most of them magazines, explained the essence of the problem.

The media from RS presented this case as an open effort of Bosniak politicians to promote their unitarian politics. Banja Luka magazine *Novi reporter* criticized parties and politicians from the Federation for making “all this political madness” and for “initiating megalomaniac reconstruction of the system in BiH”,<sup>34</sup> also accusing Dervo Sejdić of being a “puppet” of pro-Bosniak politics, taking into account the fact that a member of a minority theoretically could not be elected as a member of the Presidency of BiH.<sup>35</sup> Also, the media reported on the incident created by Dervo Sejdić, president of the Association of Roma in BiH, when he demonstrated his dissatisfaction with the work of the Commission by tearing up a document of its conclusions.<sup>36</sup> Some media from Republika Srpska criticized this act.<sup>37</sup>

Daily media reports are full of statements of local politicians who mention a solution to the case as a pre-condition for EU integration process<sup>38</sup> and further democratic development of BiH. However, at the time of writing, political parties still hold to their mutually exclusive proposals<sup>39</sup> which make it almost impossible to reach a consensus on the issue.<sup>40</sup>

## 2.4. *Minority issues and the status of the Roma*

With the exception of the Roma, which is the largest minority community, and the Jews, who have a different position as a traditional religious community, the remaining legally recognized minorities in BiH society are completely marginalized in the media.<sup>41</sup> Relevant studies show that the number of articles dealing with national minorities in the media is extremely low and is approximately equal to the share of minorities in the general population of BiH. Research by the Human Rights Office from Tuzla showed that the share of these articles is about 0.17%, while the share of the minority population in the total population of BiH is approximately 1.21% (less than 53,000 out of 4.38 million inhabitants).<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> „Mala zemlja za veliki odmor“, 9. Novembar 2011., *Novi reporter*, 12-13 (citations translated by author).

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> „Sejdić poderao zaključke“, 14. oktobar 2011., *Dnevni avaz*: 8; Sejdić pocjepao zaključak Parlamenta BiH“, 14. oktobar 2011., *Oslobođenje*: 6-7; „Dervo i Jakob protiv ostataka svijeta“, 21. October 2011., *Dani*: 32-34.

<sup>37</sup> „Sejdić prekršio Konvenciju o ljudskim pravima“, *Nezavisne novine*, 17. October 2011: 5.

<sup>38</sup> „Sejdić i Finci, pa put u Evropu“, *Oslobođenje*, 3 April 2012: 12-13.

<sup>39</sup> „Građani BiH i dalje nisu ravnopravni“, *Nezavisne*, 31 May 2012: 12.

<sup>40</sup> „Još nismo spremni za Evropu“, *Oslobođenje*, 13 March 2012: 4; „Za koga rade Dervo Sejdić i Jakob Finci“, *Dani*, 16 March 2012: 44; „Bez dogovora šestorke neće biti napretka“, *Dnevni avaz*, 13 March 2012: 8.

<sup>41</sup> According to the last census from 1991, the following minority populations lived in BiH: 4,922 Albanians, 10,048 Montenegrins, 590 Chechs, 732 Italians, 426 Jews, 893 Hungarians, 1,596 Macedonians, 470 Germans, 526 Polish, 8,864 Roma, 162 Romanians, 297 Russians, 133 Ruthenians, 297 Slovaks, 267 Turks and 3,929 Ukranians. Available at the Federal Institute for Statistics: <http://www.fzs.ba/Podaci/nacion%20po%20mjesnim.pdf>.

<sup>42</sup> Biro za ljudska prava, 2009: 10.

Although media coverage of minorities differs from case to case, some trends can be observed. Reporting on minorities has been characterized by incidents or accidents; the media report on their problems in a sporadic manner (the largest concentration of print articles and TV broadcasts are concentrated during periods when important dates are celebrated or events are organized) and is full of stereotypes and prejudices (often negative). A consequence of such reporting is that an atmosphere of intolerance, ignorance and underestimation has been created.<sup>43</sup> Media content is mainly comprised of news that focuses on crime, social problems, culture, tradition, history and general topics.<sup>44</sup>

The most represented ethnic minority is the Roma, whose coverage accounts for more than 60% of all articles relating to minority issues. In general, the media treatment of the Roma community is passive, *ad hoc*, with an absence of engaged coverage of Roma issues, particularly on topics relating to their status and citizenship. In 2007, the most frequent topics relating to the Roma minority in all of the print media in BiH were human and minority rights (18%), housing (16%), education (14%), 'obituaries' (deaths), accidents and criminal matters (11%), war crimes (9%), activities of NGOs and Roma-related international organizations (8%), etc.<sup>45</sup>

When it reported on the status of Roma people in BiH, the media did not mention citizenship explicitly, but rather stressed the unsolved status of Roma who fled from Kosovo and now have refugee status. On 7 July 2007, both Federal TV and BHTV1 broadcasted a story about Roma from Kosovo that live in Salakovac near Mostar and whose refugee status in BiH is expiring. They do not want to go back to Kosovo, and state authorities do not have any ideas or solutions for this group that number around 250. In that light, the daily *Oslobođenje* and its journalists showed the greatest amount of sensitivity for the Roma and their problems. On 21 June 2007, its editor Ahmet Burić wrote comments on the unsolved situation of Roma families in Salakovac. He criticized the passivity of the authorities in BiH in solving their status and problems.<sup>46</sup>

## 2.5. Conclusion

BiH has the most complex media system in the region and its media are both highly utilised by and dependent on political actors. This has been characterized by strong external pluralism and media affiliation to certain political options or parties. It is impossible to talk about a unique media front or state-based media (with the

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<sup>43</sup> Marko, D. in Jusić and Hodžić (eds.), 2010: 158-159.

<sup>44</sup> Biro za ljudska prava, 2009: 8-9.

<sup>45</sup> Analysis has been done from 15 May to 15 November 2007, on a sample that consisted of 453 articles from print media and eight items that were broadcasted by the main informative shows of the Public Broadcasting Service of BiH. Source: Marko, 2008.

<sup>46</sup> "Poluljudi u polukrugu", *Oslobođenje*, 21 June 2007: 7.



exemption of BHTV which has low influence), but rather about various ethno-political media fronts which are internally segmented.

The first line of division goes along territorial lines; we can distinguish between media from RS and media from the Federation of BiH. In spite of the fact that in RS the media is divided between those that support the entity regime and those who criticize it, the common characteristic of their editorial policies is an obvious ethno-national tone of reporting and a focus on Serbs and one entity (Republika Srpska), while some of them further insist on close ties with Serbia. This orientation in their editorial policies was evident when those media reported on issues related to citizenship. While some consider the state of BiH as a “necessary evil” (*Novi reporter, Glas Srpske, Fokus*), some reported on citizenship-related issues in a more moderate way but with an obvious focus on Serb politics (oppositional TV BN – Bijeljina, ATV, or the daily *Nezavisne*). Some insist on issues related to citizenship in the RS, on special relations (and on dual citizenship) with Serbia, and some were very critical towards the war-time naturalization, which they used to criticize Bosniak politicians.

The second line of division goes along ethnic lines, where three blocs can be recognized: pro-Serb that mostly overlaps with the pro-entity oriented bloc, pro-Bosniak and pro-Croat. What is common in reporting on citizenship is the focus on their own group, and permanent criticism of the others. While the pro-Croat media reported on citizenship of BiH without an affirmative or negative stance, they focused mainly on the marginalized position of Croats in BiH and their special ties with Croatia. Pro-Bosnian media reported on these issues in the highest amount. The pro-Bosnian media bloc is the only one that was not predominantly characterized with an ethnic tone/focus of reporting. Here we can distinguish between media that use an exclusive pro-Bosniak ethnic tone (*Dnevni avaz*) and those that offer a civic perspective (*Oslobođenje, Slobodna Bosna* and *Dani*).

There was little reporting on issues relating to minorities, especially on their status and rights. Most of the media reported on the *Sejdić and Finci v. BiH* case in a balanced manner, with the exception of a few media outlets from Republika Srpska that equated this case with the effort of Bosniak politicians to unify the state.

### **3. Serbia: from civic-oriented towards ethnically aware media**

During the 1990s, the most influential media constituted the so-called “patriotic front” with directors and editors-in-chief loyal to the regime of Slobodan Milošević, enabling him to control over 90% of the media space.<sup>47</sup> In the same period the so-called independent or oppositional media also existed in Serbia. Their work was

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<sup>47</sup> This was noted by the Special Reporter of the UN Commission for Human Rights Tadeusz Mazowiecki. In 1994 he wrote that information encoded by the leading media in the states of the former Yugoslavia were created within the nationalistic discourse, where the dominant matrix of reporting contained insulting and offensive contents towards “others”. This kind of reporting provoked terrible atrocities, not only on the battlefield. Source: Mazowiecki 1994: 35.



supported mainly by international donors, and these media tried to offer an alternative voice. After the democratic changes in 2000, successive governments in post-Milošević Serbia established a new media legal framework in accordance with European standards, but in practice the strong ties between the media and political actors remain. In recent years, the media have been facing new financial pressures.

During the 1990s, the pro-governmental media bloc consisted of the dailies *Politika*, *Večernje novosti*, *Glas javnosti*, the weekly *NIN*, and other dailies or periodicals sponsored by particular political parties.<sup>48</sup> *Politika* was the first modern daily in Serbia, launched in 1904. With the rise of the Milošević regime, this daily became an obedient servant of the ruling political elite.<sup>49</sup> During the 2000s *Politika* succeeded in distancing itself from parties in power, but retain a nationalistic tone while reporting on the main political issues. *Večernje novosti* (founded in 1953), was also associated with the Milosevic regime in the 1990s, being one of his main mouthpieces. After 2000, this daily remained one of the most influential dailies in Serbia, keeping a strong ethnic and nationalistic tone in its reporting. During the 1990s, *NIN*, which was formerly a 'quality' paper, adopted a slightly more populist tone that tied it with narratives of the Milošević regime, mainly because it was forced to compete with numerous political and sensational periodicals in Serbia. Recently, this magazine was bought by a Swiss media company, Ringier AG (the owner of daily *Blic*), which has restored its editorial policy to a more moderate stance.

On the other hand, the daily *Danas* and the weekly *Vreme* represented the oppositional media in the 1990s. *Danas* was established in the middle of 1997. Due to its professional reporting and uncensored coverage on issues and events plaguing Yugoslav and Serbian society in the late 1990s, the paper often found itself targeted by the Serbian authorities. *Danas* was closed down for several days in 1998 during NATO's bombing of FR Yugoslavia. After 2000, this daily was the only one that ignored commercial temptations; as a result, its circulation has been continually in decline. The weekly *Vreme* was launched in 1990 by liberal Serbian intellectuals, dissatisfied with the regime's control of the media. During the 1990s, it established a reputation as one of the most reliable media sources of the former Yugoslavia and its articles were widely cited by the international media.

When it comes to reporting on issues related to citizenship, the media debates mostly focused on the adoption of citizenship laws, the cases of dual citizenship, the status of Albanians from Kosovo and Serb refugees, and the newly adopted Serbian Constitution, but also on the status and position of national minorities.

### 3.1. *De jure excluded: the Serb refugees*

During the 1990s the Serbian citizenship regime was presented as being more 'civic' and democratic than it was in practice. In spite of the fact that inclusiveness and

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<sup>48</sup> Veljanovski, R, 2009: 48-55.

<sup>49</sup> Matić, in Spassov, O, 2004: 254-275.

openness was promoted as one of the main characteristics of the Serbian regime, its rigid structure and control of access to citizenship affected two groups of people — Serb refugees who were *de jure* excluded (prevented from becoming citizens), and the ethnic Albanian population in Kosovo who were *de facto* excluded.

The most comprehensive research on refugees and displaced persons from Croatia, BiH and Kosovo was conducted in 2005 and showed how the Serbian press reported on refugees during the period from 1990 to 2005.<sup>50</sup> It concluded that “differences in approaches of the pro-governmental and independent press are minor; both were shown to have an equal lack of understanding toward the topic, contributing to social marginalization of refugees”.<sup>51</sup>

As its author Jelena Grujić commented, citizenship was not strictly the focus of her research, it was rather considered as part of the wider corpus of political rights. In that regard, all drafted conclusions from her research are applicable to the problem of effective statelessness and treatment of citizenship rights of refugees in the Serbian media. Generally speaking, the problem of citizenship attracted very little attention when the media reported on refugee issues. The media did not elaborate on the analysis of whether refugees, even after getting facilitated access to citizenship, are still suffering from limitations of certain rights and freedoms.<sup>52</sup> The general trend in reporting on refugees was coloured in the Serbian media through insisting on one’s own ethnic origin or belonging, in cases when it “was necessary for information”.<sup>53</sup>

Both pro-governmental and independent media have instrumentalized refugees and used them in two ways: (a) through *passivization* (in media reporting during the 1990s refugees were treated as passive agents or as an “additional” argument to support/illustrate other topics (or, to simplify it, the case of refugees was misused by the media for supporting or criticizing certain political options); and (b) through *objectivization* where refugees were used as “objects” for the promotion of certain policies in two ways—through sensationalistic portrayal of their suffering.<sup>54</sup>

### 3. 2. *De facto excluded: Kosovo Albanians*

While reporting on Kosovo Albanians, in the 1990s the dominant print media (usually government controlled) in Serbia either ignored this group as a relevant subject of Serbian politics or threatened it as an “alien group” or “eternal enemy”

<sup>50</sup> This research was conducted as part of the project “Political framing of refugees: 1990 – 2005”, and she analyzed 8,912 articles published in pro-governmental and independent dailies, and weekly newspapers published in Serbia. For more information see Grujić, J, 2005.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> E mail interview with Jelena Grujić, conducted on 15 April 2012 (citation translated by author).

<sup>53</sup> Illustrative examples of this reporting could be found in the daily *Politika*— at the beginning of the 1990s it reported that “it is necessary to settle Serbs intensively”, 4 April 1992, while at the beginning of the 2000s, this daily advocated agitation for the return of Serbs on to Kosovo - “Povratak Srba na Kosovo u oktobru”, 11 September 2000; “Postoje uslovi za povratak Srba na Kosovo”, 5 March 2001; “Pravi povratak Srba tek treba da pocne”, 17 July 2001.

<sup>54</sup> Examples: „Premijer protiv komesara“, *NIN*, 3 October 2002; “Opasan potez“, *Ekonomist*, 23 February 2003.

that endangers Serbian sovereignty.<sup>55</sup> Only oppositional or independent media have considered this group as one that also suffered under the repression of the Serbian regime, and reports in this media have been classified under human and minority rights (mainly *Danas*, *Vreme* and the radio show *Pešćanik*). Albanians from Kosovo, as an autochthonous population living in Kosovo have been neglected in the media analysis on the adoption of the new Serbian Constitution in 2006. And while media reports were characterized by meta-narratives (see the next section) or by presenting various positions of political actors towards the Serbian Constitution, Albanians were almost ignored, usually passively but in some occasions even actively as it is obvious from the headline in the daily *Politika*: “It will be legitimate even without Albanians”.<sup>56</sup> The media much more frequently reported on Albanians from Kosovo after Serbia was granted visa liberalization in 2008. Most of the “nationalistic” media bloc (*Politika*, *Večernje novosti*, *Glas javnosti*, *Press*) considers it to be illegitimate or even hypocritical that Albanians claim or actively used Serbian passports to travel to the EU without visas.<sup>57</sup> These media outlets did not miss out on reporting on a “scandal” where certain local authorities in the Serbian cities of Niš and Svrlijig were issuing fake ID numbers to Albanians for money.<sup>58</sup> Those media outlets that adopted a nationalistic tone in reporting on citizenship-related issues promoted the state policy of Serbia that “Kosovo is part of Serbia”, but at the same time neglected the fact that if Kosovo is part of Serbia, then Kosovo Albanians should be treated as regular citizens without difference or discrimination.

### 3.3. The new Constitution and new Citizenship law

The debates on the 2006 Serbian Constitution, as presented by the media, demonstrate a new pluralism of media positions: (a) the media were not so strictly divided as in the 1990s, and they took moderate rather than extreme positions, and (b) internal pluralism, in terms of content, and an increased number of media outlets became platforms for representation and comparison of different views. But the editorial policies of the most significant print media favoured certain political standpoints. For example, *Politika*, with its reputation of being a respected ‘quality’ paper, influential among academics, politicians and the moderate nationalistic elite, reported in favour of adopting the new Serbian Constitution.<sup>59</sup> On the other hand, this paper also gave space to those who opposed the constitution. However, the

<sup>55</sup> Milosavljević, O. “Skenderbeg je Srbin”, *Pešćanik*, 10 March 2008, available at <http://www.pescanik.info/content/view/125/105/>; Strategic Marketing, “Public Opinion in Serbia”, 31 March 2009, available at <http://www.pescanik.info/content/view/2922/58/>.

<sup>56</sup> *Politika*, 29 September 2006: A6.

<sup>57</sup> „Kad treba dobar im srpski pasoš“, *Glas javnosti*, 14 October 2008: 7; “Novi pasoš Srbije magnet za Albance“, *Politika*, 18 October 2008: A9; „Albanci putuju kao Srbi“, *Press*, 14 October 2008: 10.

<sup>58</sup> “Matičari izdavalali lažne izvode Albancima“, “*Blic*”, 22 October 2008: 14; “Devizama plaćali lažna dokumenta“, *Glas javnosti*, 25 October 2008: 10; “Uzimali evre za srpsko državljanstvo“, *Večernje novosti*, 22 October 2008: 7.

<sup>59</sup> “Odbraniti srpstvo novim ustavom“, *Glas javnosti*, 8 August 2006: 14; “Ustav drugo ime za državu Srbiju“, *Politika*, 16 October 2007: A7; “Glas za srpsku državu“, “*Večernje novosti*”, 9 October 2006: 2; “Glas za srce Srbije“, *Večernje novosti*, 27 October 2006: 4.

articles in favour of the constitution were published in the first section of the paper,<sup>60</sup> even on the front page, while oppositional views were published in sections of lesser importance. When it comes to the headlines, it was obvious from the tone and connotation that certain political options were favoured<sup>61</sup> while others, those that were oppositional, were presented in a negative or neutral sense.<sup>62</sup>

Based on their reporting on the new constitution, especially in relation to the obvious intention of leading political parties to misuse it in order to proclaim Kosovo a part of the Serbian state, the media could be divided into two camps – (a) affirmative or apologetic, such as *Politika*, *Glas javnosti*, *Večernje novosti*, *NIN*, and most of the sensationalistic dailies such as *Pravda* and *Kurir*, and (b) oppositional or critical, like the civic-oriented media, such as the dailies *Danas*, *Dnevnik*, *Građanski list*, *Blic*, as well as the weekly *Vreme*.

The media blocs remained the same when it came to reporting on new legislation that regulates citizenship, in both 2004 and in 2007. The adoption of this legislation attracted huge media interest and provoked various reactions. While the daily *Danas* stated that it was of great importance “that the Law is adopted”<sup>63</sup>, the daily *Građanski list* was very critical and commented on the obvious ethnic engineering behind the procedures for acquiring Serbian citizenship.<sup>64</sup> Some other papers, such as *Politika* stressed the fact that this “law will make strong links with the diaspora” (which is primarily Serbian),<sup>65</sup> whereas the daily *Press* was rather sensationalistic and nationally-oriented in their reporting.<sup>66</sup> Similarly, some outlets such as (*Glas javnosti*)<sup>67</sup> reported exclusively in favour of the decision to grant Serbian citizenship to all Serbs, exclusively advocating for the rights of Serbs living in Montenegro.

Besides this, the topic of dual citizenship — which is also closely linked with the adoption of citizenship laws in Serbia and Montenegro — has attracted the media's interest since the separation of the two states in 2006. *Politika*, while reporting on this issue, openly supported the rights of Serbs in Montenegro and advocated for dual citizenship for this group. It predicted uncertainties when it comes to the regulation of dual citizenship under the Montenegrin laws. In an article published in *Politika* on 19 August 2007, it was argued that the new Law on Citizenship in Montenegro will allow for dual citizenship only in exceptional cases. On the other hand, as the same paper reported, Serbian law will be much more liberal and allow Serbian citizenship under certain conditions but without depriving those persons of

<sup>60</sup> “Ustav u preambuli”, *Politika*, 12 October 2006: A15.

<sup>61</sup> “Ustav je najvažnija knjiga Srbije”, *Politika*, 26 October 2006: A17; „Koštunica: Glasajte za dobru budućnost Srbije”, *Politika*, 28 October 2006: A5.

<sup>62</sup> „LDP kreće u antiustavnu kampanju”, *Politika*, 16 September 2006: A9; „Mladi LDP-a pozvali na bojkot Ustava”, *Politika*, 26 September 2006: A6.

<sup>63</sup> “Koštunica: Važno je da je usvojen Zakon o državljanstvu”, *Danas*, 25 September 2007: 3.

<sup>64</sup> “Srbija dobija milione potencijalnih birača”, *Građanski list*, 25 September 2007: 5.

<sup>65</sup> “Koštunica: Zakon o državljanstvu jača veze sa dijasporom”, *Politika*, 25 September 2007: A6.

<sup>66</sup> “Svim Srbima državljanstvo”, *Press*, 25 September 2007: 4.

<sup>67</sup> “Svatom Srbinu pasoš s orlovima”, *Glas javnosti*, 1 September 2007: 4.

their current citizenship (in this case, the citizenship of Montenegro).<sup>68</sup> This was the main agenda of most media in Serbia – to support nationalist policies under the cloak of liberalism. On the other hand, the daily *Građanski list* reported on the rights of the Montenegrins in Serbia.<sup>69</sup>

*Danas* performed its critical role towards the decision of the Serbian Government to grant citizenship to all Serbs worldwide. Stevan Lilić, a law professor from Belgrade, stated to this paper that “the Serbian Law is problematic” since it would produce more problems than solutions for the Serbs in Montenegro. Lilić added that the Law itself was controversial since Serbian citizenship would be granted with Montenegrin citizenship, in a unilateral process without having consultations with Montenegro.<sup>70</sup>

### 3.4. Conclusion

During the second half of the 1990s, laws and regulations on citizenship were mostly “civic” in content, and mainstream print media generally presented them as such without sparking big debates on citizenship in general terms, while some specific topics and policies related to them (such as refugees) were presented but not substantially approached. In the 2000s, however, links between the government and the leading print media were increasingly liberalized, while the content and the manner of their reporting was becoming increasingly “ethnicized”. In this sense, the content of the leading print media corresponded with the agendas of the leading, mostly nationalistic, political parties (Democratic Party of Serbia, or DSS – legalistic nationalism, Serbian Radical Party, or SRS – ultra-nationalism) or became more nationalistic in their discourse (Democratic Party, or DS – democratic or left-of-centre nationalism, Serbian Socialistic Party – nationalism in socialistic “guise”). The only exception among the leading parties was the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and G17, established initially as an economic expert group.

When it comes to reporting on issues related to citizenship (dual citizenship, status of Albanians from Kosovo and refugees of Serbian origin, citizenship legislation, the 2006 Serbian Constitution), two shifts took place. First, when we compare the media content in the 1990s and 2000s, it is evident that external pluralism (explicit ties with governmental structures and exclusive political options) was weakened, and that new forms of control took over (new forms of ownership instead of direct political control), while internal pluralism (related to media content) was increased. Second, the division between pro-governmental and oppositional media from the 1990s has been replaced now with the division between more ethnic or nationalistic-oriented media that affirmatively report on government decisions related to citizenship (*Politika*, *Večernje novosti*, *Glas javnosti*, and many other sensationalistic dailies such as *Kurir*, *Pravda*, or *Press*), and those that report in a more

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<sup>68</sup> “Stranci u svojoj državi”, *Politika*, 19 August 2007: A6.

<sup>69</sup> “Bez dvojnog državljanstva Crnogorcima u Srbiji preči asimilacija”, *Građanski list*, 10 July 2007: 3.

<sup>70</sup> “Kome su lojalni ‘Srbocrnogorci’”, *Danas*, 28 September 2007: 16.

“civic” manner, being often very critical towards nationalist policies (*Danas*, *Blic*, *Vreme*, and especially the radio show *Peščanik* and the web portal *e-novine*).

#### 4. Croatia: the synergy of blood, origins, and the media

The media in Croatia went from being largely state-controlled in the 1990s — when it was ruled by the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) — towards being more pluralistic, though more under the influence of big media corporations, in the 2000s.<sup>71</sup> In 1999, Tuđman’s last year in government, the state still controlled a majority of the media. Even in 2003, the state share of media companies still amounted to 82%.<sup>72</sup> During the 1990s, only a few media outlets (*Feral Tribune* from Split, and *Novi list* from Rijeka) could be considered as free of direct political influence. Today, the leading Croatian dailies – *24 Sata*, *Jutarnji List*, *Večernji List* and *Slobodna Dalmacija*, are competing for readers and advertising. . An official database of the Chamber of Commerce on quantities of newsprint used in the production of print media shows a decline of about 25% when we compare the number of copies sold in 2007 and 2009.

During the 1990s, the daily newspaper *Vjesnik* was the mouthpiece of the regime. State ownership apparently prevents it from investments and improvements in the terms of quality. In April 2012 it ceased to exist as a print publication and since June 2012 has operated as a web portal. *Večernji list* is the most influential daily in Croatia today. During the 1990s, it belonged to supporters of the Tuđman administration and reflected its politics. Today, it promotes a conservative nationalist agenda and its editorial policy reflects the values promoted by the Catholic Church.<sup>73</sup> *Jutarnji List* was launched in 1997 by Europa Press Holding (EPH), which sold 50% of its ownership to the German publisher WAZ in 1998. This daily was much more politically neutral but also sensationalistic in comparison to *Večernji*.<sup>74</sup> *Novi List* has a strong regional base around Rijeka but is still considered to be the most balanced daily, although its influence is far less than in the late 1990s when it was a voice of Croatian democratic opposition. *Feral Tribune*, a Split based weekly, was the symbol of oppositional and anti-nationalistic struggle during the 1990s. Its reporting was characterized by a satirical tone.<sup>75</sup> *Feral* was especially famous for its provocative, satirical photomontages on the cover page. Due to serious financial difficulties, the magazine was forced to cease publication in 2008.

##### 4.1. Citizenship legislation in independent Croatia

After the declaration of independence, a set of laws including the Law on Croatian Citizenship have been proclaimed to be founding laws of the new state. On the eve of

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<sup>71</sup> Christova, and Foerger, 2009.

<sup>72</sup> White, 2005: 34.

<sup>73</sup> Christova, and Foerger, 2009.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Available at [www.feral.hr](http://www.feral.hr).

the first session of the Parliament, pro-independence oriented print media, *Vjesnik* and *Večernji list*, stressed the importance of this law, proclaiming Croatia to be a democratic and Western-oriented state.<sup>76</sup> It was interesting that both reported on the adoption of this document in a positive manner, neglecting the fact that both “blood ties” and “the principle of Croat ethnicity” have been promoted as the most important preconditions for newly established citizenship status.

Both published the explanation of the new citizenship policy provided by Milan Ramljak, vice president of the Croatian Government. Ramljak explained that Croats seemed to be the most endangered nation within the former Yugoslavia when it comes to citizenship, illustrating this with the fact that “from 1977 to 1986, 17,891 ethnic Croats were deprived of Yugoslav citizenship, which made up 40% of the total number of those who lost their citizenship”. Ramljak added that “Croatia was, is, and will be a homeland of those who want it, primarily for the Croat portion of its citizens”, and further, that “the state of Croatia will decide who will gain Croatian citizenship without being asked to pass through special procedures”.<sup>77</sup>

Following the adoption of the Law on Citizenship, *Večernji list* published an interview with Franjo Tuđman, presenting him as a democratic and fair politician. This was illustrated by his comments on the media in Croatia: “When it comes to journalism, it is clear that politics or the state shouldn't influence their editorial policies. Responsibility for public comments should be the highest principle, and each case of the false information or defamation must be sanctioned”.<sup>78</sup> Most of the questions in this interview related to the position of Serbs in Croatia, to reiterate the historical linkages between Serbs and Croats, where the former were portrayed as “bad guys” and the latter as victims. The ethnic principle of Croatian citizenship could be clearly noticed in Tuđman's answer when he claimed, “We are creating the Croatian government, Croatian democracy, Croatian freedom, Croatian sovereignty after decades of socialism and the absence of sovereignty ... for the Croatian man”.<sup>79</sup>

*Feral Tribune* was the first and most influential Croatian media outlet to openly report on various topics that the state-controlled newspapers would not, such as war crimes perpetrated by Croatian soldiers, but also on Tuđman's politics and his vision of Croatian nationalism, connections between the government and the Catholic Church. During the war years (1993 -1995) this magazine was critical of ethnic engineering,<sup>80</sup> reporting very often on rights and freedoms in regard to citizenship

<sup>76</sup> „Zakoni za samostalnost“, *“Vjesnik”*, 15 June 1991; “Samostalna Hrvatska kao temelj dogovora“, *“Vjesnik”*, 19 June 1991; “Zakonska potvrda samostalnosti“, *“Vjesnik”*, 27 June 1991: 5; “Zakoni za samostalnost“, *“Večernji list”*, 16 June 1991: 3; „Dokumenti suverene države“, *“Večernji list”*, 19 June 1991: 2 – 3.

<sup>77</sup> „Državljanstvo, prvi korak“, *Vjesnik*, 19 June 1991; “Dokumenti suverene države“, *Večernji list*, 19 June 1991: 2 - 3

<sup>78</sup> „Hrvatska država postaje stvarnost“, *Večernji list*, 20 June 1991: 23 (citation translated by author).

<sup>79</sup> Ibid (citation translated by author).

<sup>80</sup> “Strogo kontrolirani zbjegovi“, *Feral Tribune*, 24 august 1994: 6-7; “Katolička crkva i hrvatska država: Etnički inženjering nazovivjernika“, *Feral Tribune*, 8 February 1994: 12-13; Series of articles on ethnic engineering were published on 25 September 1995: 13 – 21.

status<sup>81</sup> and sharing with its public the specific human stories of those who were deprived of their rights and status.<sup>82</sup>

At the end of October 2011, the Croatian citizenship law was substantially changed during the last session of the Croatian Parliament (while HDZ still had the majority) with almost no public debate. No leading media paid much attention to this. *Jutarnji list* informed its readership that foreigners, in order to be granted Croatian citizenship, would have to live at least eight years in Croatia (instead of five), learn the Croatian language and be familiar with the political situation. On the other hand, this law liberalized the conditions for acquiring Croatian citizenship for those who had residence in Croatia on 8 October 1991.<sup>83</sup> Other media, such as *Vjesnik*, reported on this issue occasionally, but placed little emphasis on this topic.<sup>84</sup> Some radical and nationalist outlets, with minor influence (such as the *Croatian Focus*), criticized this decision especially its definition of those who belong to the Croatian people and blamed the moderate and non-nationalistic Social-democrat Party.<sup>85</sup>

#### 4.2. *The status and rights of the Serb minority*

There is no systematic research on how the Croatian media reported on the citizenship status of the Serbian national minority from 1991 until today. There is only research based on partial samples, usually related to elections or political representation of the Serbian minority.<sup>86</sup> The “discourse of the Serbian threat” was prevailing during the war, and it was generated by Croatian political authorities and pro-governmental media. Serbs were generally portrayed as aggressors, and resident Serbs were considered “an obstacle and threat for the realization of Tuđman’s nationalistic goals”.<sup>87</sup> There have been a number of studies of the role of the Croatian media during the war as propagandists.<sup>88</sup> While the leading media presented the new Croatian government, led by the HDZ and President Tuđman, in a positive context<sup>89</sup>, *Feral Tribune* was the only Croatian print media that resisted the nationalist government and openly reported on “taboo” issues such as “human removal”,<sup>90</sup>

<sup>81</sup> „Hrvatska na stupu srama“, *Feral Tribune*, 13 November, 1995: 15 – 18.

<sup>82</sup> „Stranac u domovini“, *Feral Tribune*, 14 March 1994: 14.

<sup>83</sup> „Vlada: Stranci teže do naše putovnice.“, *Jutarnji list*, 20 October 2011, available at <http://www.jutarnji.hr/vlada-stranci-teze-do-nase-putovnice-morat-ce-dobro-poznavati-hrvatski-jezik-i-povijest-kao-i-drustveno-uredenje-hrvatske/982174/>.

<sup>84</sup> *Vjesnik*, 20 October 2011, available at <http://www.vjesnik.hr/Article.aspx?ID=FB62C8D6-B71F-409D-BFCD-366D5D9C8D7C>.

<sup>85</sup> „Prve žrtve SDP-ova Zakona o izmjenama i dopunama Zakona o hrvatskome državljanstvu“, *Hrvatski fokus*, 26 December 2011, available at <http://www.hrvatski-fokus.hr/index.php/iseljenistvo/3822-prve-rtve-sdp-ova-zakona-o-izmjenama-i-dopunama-zakona-o-hrvatskome-dravljanstvu>.

<sup>86</sup> Kanižaj, Igor. *Minorities – between the public and reality: reporting on national minorities in the newspapers 2001-2005*, Zagreb: ICEJ and Sveučilišna knjižara, 2006.

<sup>87</sup> Koska, 2011: 20.

<sup>88</sup> Kurspahić, 2003.; Thompson, 1995.; Slapšak, S. and H. Steiner, 1997.

<sup>89</sup> „Što nudi Tuđman“, *Večernji list*, 21-22 June 1991: 3.

<sup>90</sup> „Prokleti dođoši“, *Feral Tribune*, 16 November 1993: 7; „Domovina pod kamenom“, *Feral Tribune*, 21 September 1993: 6; „Kosovski lijek protiv bijele kuge“, *Feral Tribune*, 1994: 20 – 21.



Serbs who as Croatian citizens refused to take part in the war<sup>91</sup> and reported on discrimination against ethnic Serbs in the government controlled areas.<sup>92</sup>

This trend of biased reporting and negative portrayal of Croatian Serbs continued around the time of Operation Storm and during the Serb exodus. Mainstream print media presented this operation as a cornerstone of Croatian statehood while neglecting the violent and discriminative practices towards Serbs. Research has shown how the Croatian government instructed the media to report on false events in order to present their military activities as defensive and portray Serbs exclusively as the aggressors.<sup>93</sup> This way of reporting prepared the ground for the discriminative practices of Croatian (or Tuđman) rule in the second part of 1990s, when the rights of Serb refugees (status, tenancy rights, voting rights) were generally ignored.

The citizenship status of Serbs from Croatia did not receive much coverage in the leading print media, which mirrored the official politics of HDZ represented in President Tuđman's statement in 1998 ("We solved the Serbian question. There will be no 12% of Serbs and 9% of Yugoslavs, as it used to be. Should they comprise 3 or 5%, it is not a big deal since they can't endanger the Croatian state").<sup>94</sup> Only once the status of the Croatian nationhood had been "solved", and Serbs were not considered "a threat to its state" (and once the nationalists had lost power after Tuđman's death in 2000) could a new phase be introduced during which Serb refugees slowly regained their citizenship status. Recently, the media has showed a higher sensitivity towards minority questions, and they are not following strictly political agendas. There are even traces of criticism in certain Croatian outlets towards some governmental decisions on minority integration.

### 4.3. Croatian diaspora

The problematic notion of "diaspora" has often been misused in political discourse in Croatia (especially by the HDZ)<sup>95</sup>. During the 1990s the leading print media, affiliated with the HDZ, reflected its politics towards the diaspora, making impossible any attempt from the side of oppositional parties or independent actors to deliberate on the issue of "diaspora" in public space. *Feral Tribune* was among those media outlets that criticized these efforts of appropriation of the term "diaspora" solely for the sake of political interests.

The main issues, related to citizenship rights, are diaspora voting rights. This was widely debated in both the Croatian and BiH media, since Croats from this state have regularly participated in Croatian elections, mainly supporting HDZ. In the

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<sup>91</sup> "Srbi koji su odbili rat", *Feral Tribune*, 15 June 1993: 10.

<sup>92</sup> "Istjerivanje četnikuša", *Feral Tribune*, 8 February 1994: 10-11; "Siloviti juriš HV, oslobođeno 87 m<sup>2</sup>", *Feral Tribune*, 31 July 1995: 20-21; "Jezikom po zubima", *Feral Tribune*, 24 July 1995: 22-23.

<sup>93</sup> The research took into account reporting of the leading Croatian print media from the period 2 August 1995 – mid-August 2006. See: Đerić, 2008: 64-97.

<sup>94</sup> Đerić, 2008: 64-97; *Večernji list*, 15 December 1998 (citation translated by author).

<sup>95</sup> Koska, 2010: 21

second half of the 1990s leading Croatian print media did not question the electoral motivations behind the “list for diaspora”, and tacitly supported the policies of Tuđman and the HDZ. Only the weekly *Feral Tribune* analytically approached and systematically criticized the “list for diaspora” as an obvious attempt by the HDZ to utilise the voting rights of Croats from BiH<sup>96</sup>, and, at the same time, criticizing the same regime and the same party for being indifferent towards the voting rights of Serb refugees.<sup>97</sup> In BiH, Sarajevo-based media did criticize these policies in line with the leading pro-Bosnian and “unitarian” agenda(s), claiming that Croats from BiH are not diaspora but constituent people of this state. During the 1990s the *Oslobođenje* newspaper reported critically on this “election engineering” with the “list for diaspora”, claiming that HDZ was misusing the fact that the majority of Croats from BiH supported them and that they were thus gaining electoral support through the “list for diaspora”.<sup>98</sup>

In spite of the fact that changes in the political system of Croatia after 2000 allowed for the reassessment of previously uncontested issues, Croats from BiH and their votes were still (mis)used by the HDZ during the elections held in 2003 and in 2007. While there was debate between the HDZ, which based its campaign on “diaspora rights” and the left-centre opposition that opposed it,<sup>99</sup> in BiH this was still an uncontested issue. In 2007, votes of Croats from BiH were decisive for the new Croatian Government. Since all five elected politicians from “the list for diaspora” were from the HDZ, this party won a slight majority of parliament seats to form the new government. It is interesting that Sarajevo-based media, mainly those of pro-Bosnian orientation (such as *Slobodna Bosna*, *Dani*, and *Oslobođenje*) published a series of articles critical of the HDZ manipulation of Croat votes in BiH on the eve of 2003 and 2007 elections.<sup>100</sup>

Political changes in 2000 did not substantially influence policies towards the diaspora, but the media – now distanced from direct political control – took a more critical stance towards the issue and did not support it unquestioningly. *Jutarnji list* from Croatia continuously criticised the HDZ’s diaspora policy<sup>101</sup> and especially its concept of ‘distance voting’ that was promoted by the former HDZ president Ivo Sanader during the campaigns in 2003 and 2007.<sup>102</sup> In order to support this stance, the

<sup>96</sup> “Vežite se, slijećemo”, *Feral Tribune*, 1 March 1999: 8-9; “Glas Tuđmana iz dijaspore”, *Feral Tribune*, 19 October 2007: 30-31.

<sup>97</sup> „Glasači drugog reda”, *Feral Tribune*, 19 July 1999: 10 – 11.

<sup>98</sup> „Tuđmanova lista”, *Oslobođenje*, 15 October 1995: 2.

<sup>99</sup> Zakošek 2002: 27.

<sup>100</sup> “Recidiv Tuđmanizma”, *Dani*, 14 November 2003: 29; “Velika predizborna bitka za hrvatski Sabor”, *Slobodna Bosna*, 21 September 2006: 28-32; „Sanaderovih pet musketira iz BiH”, *Slobodna Bosna*, 29 November 2007: 6-9

<sup>101</sup> „Samo u Hrvatskoj dijaspora utiče na ishod izbora”, *Jutarnji list*, 26 January 2010, available at <http://www.jutarnji.hr/samo-u-hrvatskoj-dijaspora-bitno-utjece-na-ishod-izbora/515961/>.

<sup>102</sup> “HDZ predlaže dopisno glasanje dijaspore. To je neprihvatljivo”, *Jutarnji list*, 9 September 2010, available at <http://www.jutarnji.hr/pusic-hdz-predlaze-dopisno-glasanje-dijaspare-to-je-oporbi-neprihvatljivo/547870/>; „Dopisno glasovanje samo je neuspjeli spin Vladimira Šeksa”, *Jutarnji list*, 11 February 2010, available at <http://www.jutarnji.hr/dopisno-glasovanje-samo-je-neuspjeli-spin-vladimira-seksa/555296/>.

paper published research that indicated that the majority of Croatian citizens were against diaspora voting rights for.<sup>103</sup>

This debate temporarily ended with the constitutional changes in 2010, which set the representation of non-resident Croats to a fixed symbolic quota of three seats in Parliament. The recent debate on the Strategy on Relations with Croats outside of Croatia, which was adopted by the Croatian government in May 2011,<sup>104</sup> indicated some changes in the policies towards the diaspora, and was proposed by the HDZ. This strategy that regulates the status of ethnic Croats living abroad who do not have Croatian citizenship was debated in the leading print media during 2011. *Vjesnik* mainly reported on this issue in a neutral and informative way, though there were occasions when it adopted a positive tone.<sup>105</sup> Government (still under the rule of HDZ) announced that “the return of Croat emigrants to their homeland will be among the most important priorities”.<sup>106</sup> On other occasions this paper reported that Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor met the highest officials of the Catholic Church in BiH, Cardinal Vinko Puljić and Bishop Franjo Komarica, who supported the adoption of the strategy.<sup>107</sup> While reporting on discussions on the law in spite of the fact that opposition parties strongly criticized the fact that HDZ initiated this before elections, *Vjesnik* emphasized that “all Croats are equal, in spite of where they live, and there is no need to divide emigrant and home-based Croatia”.<sup>108</sup>

*Večernji list* also reported in favour of the HDZ and its positive policies toward Croats from BiH, strongly opposing the incumbent Social-democratic Party (SDP). In an article published on 27 January 2012, they negatively portrayed the attitude of the current regime in Croatia (SDP) towards Croats living abroad through the headline t: “Marasović: Pusić will not take care of Croats living abroad”.<sup>109</sup> Another example is from an article published on 1 March 2012: “The government finally established” the Office for Croats Living Outside of Croatia.<sup>110</sup> In spite of the fact that “finally” in the title could simply mean that it took government a long time after the adoption of legislation to establish the office, it could also be read as a criticism of the

<sup>103</sup> „Svaki drugi Hrvat ukinuo bi pravo glasa dijaspori“, *Jutarnji list*, 19 February 2010, available at <http://www.jutarnji.hr/dokument-europskog-parlamenta--svaki-drugi-hrvat-ukinuo-bi-pravo-glasa-dijaspori/575429/>.

<sup>104</sup> See Koska discussion on this topic in his CITSEE working paper, Koska, 2011/15: 21-23.

<sup>105</sup> “Naknade članovima Vladinih povjerenstava maksimalno 2000 kuna“, *“Vjesnik”*, 5 May 2011, available online <http://www.vjesnik.com/Article.aspx?ID=3441901E-AF66-49B4-B70E-71D948A640AC>.

<sup>106</sup> “Hrvati izvan Hrvatske dobivaju ministarstvo?”, *“Vjesnik”*, 9 May 2011, available <http://www.vjesnik.hr/Article.aspx?ID=51f14a2f-e013-422b-9192-2305009301d9> (citation translated by author).

<sup>107</sup> “Premijerka Kosor s kardinalom Puljićem i biskupom Komaricom“, *“Vjesnik”*, 17 June 2011, available <http://www.vjesnik.com/Article.aspx?ID=5A7492A2-7361-4DF3-B8D3-F295B5B4355E>.

<sup>108</sup> „Bagarić: Ne treba dijeliti iseljenju i domovinsku Hrvatsku“ [We should not divide Croatia on emigrant and home-based], *“Vjesnik”*, 14 July 2011, available online <http://www.vjesnik.com/Article.aspx?ID=02AF0E99-6D02-413E-B02D-A7276205E490> (citation translated by author).

<sup>109</sup> “Marasović: V. Pusić neće voditi brigu o Hrvatima u inozemstvu“, *Večernji list*, 27 January 2012, available at <http://www.vecernji.hr/vijesti/marasovic-v-pusic-nece-voditi-brigu-hrvatima-inozemstvu-clanak-370813>.

<sup>110</sup> „Darija Krstičević na čelu Ureda za Hrvate izvan RH“, *“Vecernji list”*, 1 March 2012, available online <http://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/darija-krsticevic-celu-ureda-hrvate-izvan-rh-clanak-382420>.

government for its slowness and the fact that establishment of the office was obviously not a priority.

*Jutarnji list* was rather critical and cynical towards this initiative, which is obvious from the sarcastic title, “You don't have citizenship? You can become an honourable Croat. The only condition is your love for Croatia”.<sup>111</sup> In this article, the journalist explained that the Croatian government in May 2011 adopted a Strategy on Relations with Croats who live worldwide, and excluded Croats from BiH (constituent people in BiH) and Croats from Serbia, Italy, and other neighbouring states from the diaspora.<sup>112</sup>

#### 4.4. Conclusion

Two shifting trends in media reporting on citizenship can be observed when we compare the 1990s and the 2000s. First, the division between pro-government and opposition media from the 1990s almost disappeared, and the media in the 2000s became more plural (in the sense of their content), more critical towards government, but indirectly controlled by various centres of power (for example, the publishing house EPH holds a monopoly over print media). The 2000s were the period in which the weekly *Feral Tribune*, the symbol of oppositional and anti-nationalist struggles from the 1990s, finally ceased to exist in 2008. Second, in terms of coverage, during the 1990s while the process of nation building was taking place, the media were mostly focused on the “status” aspect. Both pro-government and opposition media reported on the status of the Croat nation, the status of the Serbian minority, following Tuđman's understanding of the Croat diaspora and the promotion of the transnational Croat community. The most widely debated issue was related to the voting rights of diaspora through the so-called “list for diaspora”. In the 1990s the Croatian media were divided – either supporting or not questioning the issue of diaspora voting rights, or constantly criticizing it. The political changes in 2000 did not influence the policies towards diaspora substantially, but the media – now distanced from direct political control, took a more critical stance towards the issue and did not support it unquestioningly

#### 5. Montenegro: two types of oppositional media agendas

Strong divisions within the pro- and anti-independence line reflect the character of the media landscape in Montenegro. The former group has been characterized by reporting in favour of incumbent political options. *Pobjeda*, the oldest Montenegrin newspaper, has always been regarded as a pro-regime mouthpiece.<sup>113</sup> Following

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<sup>111</sup> “Nemate državljanstvo? Možete postati počasni Hrvati. Jedini je uvjet ljubav prema Hrvatskoj”, “Jutarnji list”, 7 May 2011, available online: <http://www.jutarnji.hr/pocasni-hrvat--hrvati-u-inozemstvu-dobit-ce--status-hrvata-bez-hrvatskog-drzavljanstva-/944194/>.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Sredanović, V, 2005.

several unsuccessful privatization attempts, it is the only state-owned daily newspaper in Montenegro. In May 2008, the government announced that, in order to make the company more appealing to potential buyers, it was considering writing-off *Pobjeda's* 2.2 million euro debt.<sup>114</sup>

The other political options have been represented by two types of opposition media. One, as epitomised by the daily newspaper *DAN*, was closely tied to the Socialist People's Party and supported Milosevic and his regime throughout the 1990s, and recently supported the pro-Serbian parties in Montenegro. It is mostly known for the murder of its owner and editor-in-chief, Dusko Jovanović, in 2004. The second, "independent" option is represented by the daily *Vijesti*, owned by Daily Press.<sup>115</sup> Its editorial policy, until 2006, was in favour of Milo Đukanović and his government's policy towards Serbia, striving for Montenegrin independence. However, *Vijesti* changed course after 2006 when it became critical of Đukanović. As a result, journalists of this daily are said to be constantly threatened, and have been attacked.<sup>116</sup>

The weekly *Monitor* appeared in 1990, when its editorial policy was close to the oppositional Liberal Alliance and Social Democratic Party. Its position was similar to that of *Feral Tribune* in Split, and *Vreme* in Belgrade: to take a critical standpoint towards rising nationalism and make frequent critiques of the Montenegrin leadership. This paper was also a strong supporter and advocate of Montenegrin independence and today provides a moderate voice in Montenegrin society.

### 5.1. Citizenship as a tool of political manoeuvring

Politicization of ethnicity reached its peak in 2006, the year of Montenegrin independence and a year before the new Constitution was adopted. The most highly debated issue in regard to the new constitutional act was the civic principle of regulation of the link between citizens and the state of Montenegro regardless of any ethnic, national or religious belonging. While both pro-government and partly independent media (*Vijesti*, *Monitor*), highlighted this civic principle as the achievement of democratic awareness, the pro-Serbian media accused the government of intentionally preventing ethnic Serbs from claiming constituent status.

<sup>114</sup> "Drama oko jednog dnevnog lista u Crnoj Gori potice pitanje slobode medija", SETimes, 16 Jan 2012, available at <http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/hr/features/setimes/features/2012/01/16/feature-04>.

<sup>115</sup> The company's ownership is currently split between Montenegrin partners (59%), Austrian Styria Medien AG (25%), and American fund MDLF started by George Soros (16%).

<sup>116</sup> On September 1, 2007, Željko Ivanović, the director of this daily, was beaten on the street. He publicly accused DPS president Milo Đukanović's "biological or criminal family" for orchestrating the attack. Ivanović also referred to them as the people who want to control every aspect of life in Montenegro. In turn, Đukanović, sued him for libel. Sources: "Pretučen direktor dnevnika Vijesti", *Politika*, 2 Sept 2007; "Lawsuit against Ivanovic and Ljubisa Mitrovic", *SEEMO*, 2007.

As was reflected in pro-government media, the state of Montenegro neglected the demands of Montenegrin Serbs to be given the status of constituent people, considering it a violation of the civic principles of their constitution. On the other hand, the pro-Serbian *DAN* reflected, in most cases, the protective politics of the state of Serbia in order to prevent the assimilation of ethnic Serbs in this state.<sup>117</sup> By contrast, *Vijesti* reported on this issue without an extreme or exclusive stance, giving voice to all sides involved.

## 5.2. The 2008 Citizenship Act

The kind of “incidental” reporting was presented while the 2008 Law on Citizenship in Montenegro was being adopted with its restrictive and problematic clause on dual citizenship with Serbia. While most of the media from Serbia were in favour of Serbs living in Montenegro and criticized its government, even evoking some sentimental relations (“we were brothers”, etc.), it was interesting that viewpoints expressed in the Montenegrin media were more diverse. Besides *DAN* which wrote that this law was adopted “in accordance with the will of the ruling majority” and gave space only to the oppositional (Serbian) parties who claimed that it is “discriminatory, especially toward Serbs”,<sup>118</sup> other oppositional, but not ethnically exclusive media (e.g. *Vijesti* and *Monitor*) criticized both the government for its decision and also some politicians of Serb origin for their hypocrisy. The lack of a critical and analytical approach has been apparent in the pro-government *Pobjeda*; however this daily also gave a voice to both sides of the debate on a regular basis.<sup>119</sup> On 15 February 2008 this paper published an announcement of the Serbian List, a pro-Serbian political party that supported the solution offered by the Socialist People’s Party (SNP) on the issues of dual citizenship with Serbia, which even criticizes Montenegrin officials.<sup>120</sup> On the other hand, on 18 February 2008 this daily gave a voice to the representative of the governing party who said it is possible to find a solution for dual citizenship, and that the parliament would consider the proposal of the SNP while preparing international agreements that regulate dual citizenship.<sup>121</sup> These articles were published in 2008 when the two states—Montenegro and Serbia— believed that an agreement would be reached by the end of that year. But, due to various political reasons (e.g. recognition of Kosovo’s independence by Montenegro), this issue remains unsolved. It is interesting that *Pobjeda* gave some space in its articles for oppositional claims and critiques, but it was obvious that manipulation with titles and positioning of sources took place. For example, the title of a report from 15 February, where both sides were consulted, was in favour of the governing party,

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<sup>117</sup> „SNP tvrdi da Strategija Vlade Srbije nije mješanje u stvari Crne Gore“, *DAN*, 4 March 2011.

<sup>118</sup> „Prošao Zakon o državljanstvu“, *DAN*, 15 February 2008: 3.

<sup>119</sup> „Usvojen Zakon o crnogorskom državljanstvu“, *Pobjeda*, 15 February 2009: Cover page.

<sup>120</sup> „Vučurović: Za SL posao oko državljanstva završen“, *Pobjeda*, 15 February 2008: 4.

<sup>121</sup> „Kalamperović: Uzećemo u obzir predlog SNP-a“, *Pobjeda*, 18 February 2008: 4.

paraphrasing the words of Jusuf Kalamperović, Montenegrin Minister of the Interior, who said that “the law is not discriminatory, but it is restrictive”.<sup>122</sup>

### 5.3. *Citizenship by investment: the case of Taksin Shinawatra*

“Citizen-by-investment” is available to individuals who have invested in the Montenegrin economy or who donate funds, and is regulated by Article 3 of the 2010 Decision on the Criteria for Determining Scientific, Business, Economic, Cultural, and Sport Interests of Montenegro.<sup>123</sup> This decision caused much turmoil in the media. In light of this decision, the case of Taksin Shinawatra, former prime minister of Thailand who was granted Montenegrin citizenship, is of special interest.

*Pobjeda* was in favour of this decision.<sup>124</sup> On 12 August, this daily published an article stating that many people found this decision problematic without providing the public with proper contra-arguments, and illustrating this with the cases of Roman Abramović, the owner of Chelsea Football Club, who was granted permanent residence in the UK, and professional boxers Vitaliy and Vladimir Klitchko, who are originally Ukrainian but have German citizenship as well.<sup>125</sup> Also, in an interview for this daily, Aleksandar Bogdanović, a member of the leading Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS), claimed that this concept of “economic citizenship” would attract new investors to Montenegro.<sup>126</sup>

Other print media reported on this issue in a neutral manner, or were critical of this decision. *Vijesti* was party neutral,<sup>127</sup> but mostly used the issue to criticize Đukanović.<sup>128</sup> The pro-Serbian oriented daily *DAN* was much more radical in its critiques, claiming that Đukanović had the intention to create “an El Dorado for the mafia” in Montenegro,<sup>129</sup> to use this mechanism for “money laundering”,<sup>130</sup> and that European states were very critical of this decision.<sup>131</sup>

*Monitor* was also very critical, as indicated by the titles of its articles: “The Price of Citizenship: One Montenegrin is equal to 650 Russians”,<sup>132</sup> “Montenegro and 40 Robbers”,<sup>133</sup> “Crimo-citizens”,<sup>134</sup> etc. Modest critiques came from the side of

<sup>122</sup> „Kalamperović: Zakon restriktivan, ali nije diskriminatorski“, *Pobjeda* 15 February 2008: 3.

<sup>123</sup> See Džankić discussion in her CITSEE working paper, Džankić, 2010/03: 16-17.

<sup>124</sup> “Svako bi pozeleo Manka za svog državljanina“, *Pobjeda*, 15 August 2010: 3; “Ambasador Kanade: Ekonomsko državljanstvo je odličan potez Vlade“, *Pobjeda*, 16 August 2010: 3.

<sup>125</sup> „Mnogima smeta što želimo nekog Murinja u ekonomiji“, *Feral Tribune*, 12 August 2010: 3.

<sup>126</sup> „Bogdanović: Pozitivan signal stranim investitorima“, *Pobjeda*, 13 August 2010: 4.

<sup>127</sup> „Pasoš za pola miliona eura“, *Vijesti*, 10 August 2010: 2.

<sup>128</sup> „Đukanovićev tim se nada bogatim Kinezima, Rusima i Amerikancima“, *Vijesti*, 17 August 2010: 3.

<sup>129</sup> „Milo pravi Eldorado za svjetsku mafiju“, *DAN*, 12 August 2010: 3.

<sup>130</sup> “Od Crne Gore prave raj za pranje novca“, “DAN” *DAN*, 13 August 2010: 3; “Zakon po mjeri Deripaskе“, “DAN” *DAN*, 14 August 2010: 3.

<sup>131</sup> “Njemačka traži povrat viza za Crnu Goru“, *DAN*, 11 August 2010: 5.

<sup>132</sup> “Jedan Crnogorac za 650 Rusa” [One Montenegrin for 650 Russians], *Monitor*, 20 August 2010.

<sup>133</sup> “Crna Gora i 40 razbojnika” [Montenegro and 40 robbers], *Monitor*, 23 April 2010.

<sup>134</sup> “Krimodržavljeni” [Crimocitizens], *Monitor*, 13 August 2010.



media which are not directly linked to any of political options in Montenegro, such as Radio Free Europe.<sup>135</sup>

#### 5.4. Conclusion

The issue of citizenship and related topics have been of the highest importance in Montenegro while this state transitioned to independence in 2006. The leading print media followed the agendas of the leading parties, adopting different attitudes but with various intensity.

During the second half of the 1990s, when the state was divided over the question of whether Montenegro should be an independent state or not, two media blocs formed. One consisted of pro-government media (*Pobjeda*), and pro-independence (*Vijesti*, and *Monitor*), that supported the idea of independence and reported in its favour. The second bloc opposed this idea and expressed pro-Serbia political views (*DAN*). While the first bloc argued in favour of Montenegrins as a separate nation, the later claimed that Montenegrins are a sub-group of Serbs.

During the 2000s the pro-Montenegrin bloc was further divided into strict pro-government or pro-Đukanović (*Pobjeda*), or oppositional (*Vijesti* and *Monitor*) while the pro-Serbian bloc remained within the same matrix of reporting. The divisive issues in reporting were new constitutional arrangements, the distinction between “citizens” in a general and “citizens” in a narrow sense (related to those who possess Montenegrin citizenship), the requests of ethnic Serbs from Montenegro to be granted with constituent status, the issue of dual citizenship, the position of non-citizen residents after 2006 and problems related to their voting rights.

In reporting on these issues, the two extreme media blocs — pro-government and pro-Serbian— reported in a very biased and politically affiliated manner, portraying some decisions, governmental or from the opposition, as discriminatory against certain groups, or in a positive light. On the other side, the third bloc — oppositional but pro-Montenegrin — took a more balanced stance in reporting on these issues.

#### 6. Conclusion

A politically biased manner of reporting on citizenship was especially visible during the 1990s, when in Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro there were strong political divisions between the pro-government and opposition media. While divisions were severe in the 1990s, in the 2000s in some states the media became more politically independent and rather more business-oriented (such was the case with Croatia and Serbia), while in some (Montenegro and BiH) the media reflected the divisions and political pluralism of their society.

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<sup>135</sup> “Šinavatra dobio pasoš protivno Zakonu”, *Radio Free Europe*, 7 May 2009, available online <http://www.slobodnaevropa.org/content/article/1623549.html>.



The most salient topics in the media were those with a strong political or inter-ethnic connotation. When the media in Croatia reported on issues related to the initial determination of citizenship, the overall frame of reporting was within the context of state- and nation-building. When discussing the issues and problems related to dual citizenship policies, the media from Montenegro either affirmatively reported on it (since it is important to promote and preserve Montenegrin statehood), gave the floor to both (or to more) sides involved in debate, or criticized these policies from an ethnic (in this case, Serb) perspective, calling it discrimination in relation to basic rights. Most of the Serbian media — especially during the 2000s — became more ethnic-oriented in their reporting. Through reporting on citizenship related issues (dual citizenship with Montenegro and new citizenship regulations in Serbia) they reflect a new ethnocentric Serbian citizenship policy.

In BiH a strong instrumentalization of the media and changing affiliations made it hard, or almost impossible, to detect rigid trends in reporting on citizenship-related issues. Based on existing research and findings, it was possible to detect the leading media outlets' orientations towards the state of BiH. Due to its complex political and media scene, most reports on citizenship in BiH could be classified within the scope of reporting on 'others'. Therefore, ethno-politically affiliated media used specific cases to defend the position of their own people (or politicians) and to criticize opponents. For example, while reporting on naturalized citizens in BiH of Muslim origin, the pro-Serb media argued that most of these people were former mujahedeen warriors or 'terrorists' and criticized the former or incumbent Bosniak authorities for granting them BiH citizenship. The main pro-Bosniak media criticized Croatian and Serbian citizenship policies (mainly in the domain of dual citizenship with BiH) for being "expansionist" and manipulative (the Croatian citizenship regime was criticized for allowing Bosnian Croats to vote at Croatian elections; and the Serbian regime was criticized for being closely tied with Republika Srpska). On the other hand, the media from Republika Srpska in most cases were exclusively concerned with issues related to belonging to the state of BiH.

Certain issues (such as the situation of refugees in Serbia, or national minorities in general) have only received superficial coverage by the media, while a real debate on their status and their rights has been absent. The portrayal of refugees in Serbian media discourse illustrates how social and media marginalization of certain categories of the people can influence their unsolved status, in spite of the fact that they are of the same ethnic background as the majority.

To conclude, research confirms the main assumption that the most influential media have been politically biased, either towards the regime or the opposition; only in a very small number of cases did they serve as a space in which to debate different visions of citizenship and political community. The public agenda(s) on citizenship, generated by the media, were mainly conceptualized around the following issues: the notion of (ethnic or religious) belonging, the relationships between majority and minority and the questions of dual citizenship. Neutral and critical media that open a space for a truly democratic and public debate on citizenship issues remain marginal

in post-Yugoslav states. While this is a general problem to be confronted by those states, it is demonstrated particularly clearly when it comes to their coverage of citizenship-related issues.

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